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OPEN SEASON ON HUNTERS

Although hunting is a relatively safe sport, it nevertheless claims the lives of hundreds of nimrods every year. According to the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company statisticians, firearm accidents of all types in the United States take an annual toll of about 2,200 lives or 1.3 per 100,000 population. And almost 40 per cent of these deaths occur in the three-month period from October through December, the statisticians claim.

The greatest number of firearm deaths occurs in November, when hunting activities are at a maximum. For example, the statisticians said that in 1959 fatal injuries from firearm accidents during November exceeded the annual average by about 80 per cent.

The tragedy of this lies both in the number of persons killed—although it is relatively low considering the great many who do go hunting—and in the fact that many of the accidents need not have occurred. A National Rifle Association survey showed that in only one-third of the accidents where the firearm was discharged by intention, the victim was out of sight of the shooter. Where arms were discharged unintentionally, one-sixth occurred when the shooter stumbled and fell. In 45 per cent of the accidents reported, the age of the shooter was under 20 years, and 72 per cent had at least three years of hunting experience.